

An aerial photograph of a column of military tanks, likely M1 Abrams, moving across a vast, flat, sandy desert landscape. The tanks are arranged in a staggered line, leaving deep tracks in the sand. The scene is captured from a high angle, showing the scale of the military operation.

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Legion

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A GRATEFUL NATION

Steven Brennan, chairman of The American Legion's National Security Commission, and Rhonda Powell, director of the National Security Division, at right, depart a Veterans Day ceremony at the Korean War Veterans Memorial in Washington on Nov. 11. Photo by T.J. Kirkpatrick

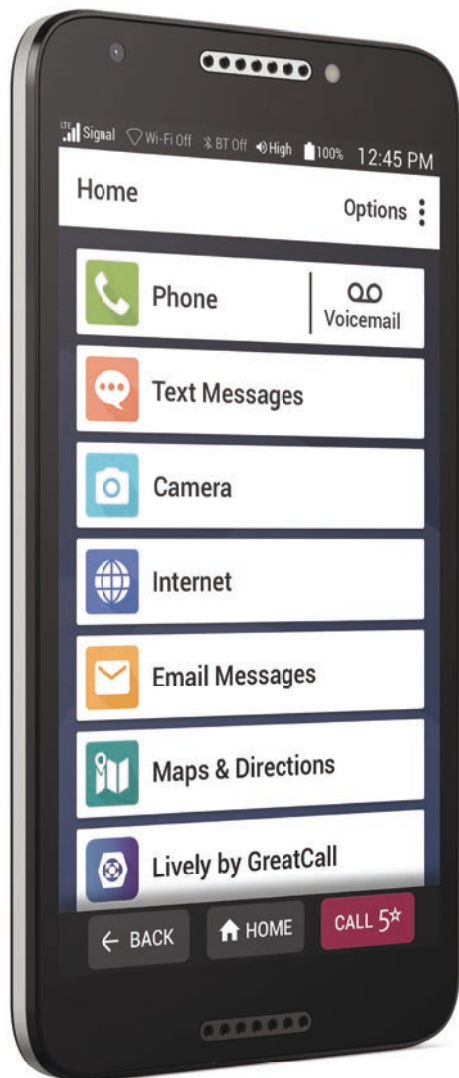
ON THE COVER

A column of M109 self-propelled 155 mm howitzers from the Army's 1st Armored Division cross a heavily tracked desert during the 1991 Gulf War. Getty

The American Legion Magazine, a leader among national general-interest publications, is published monthly by The American Legion for its nearly 2 million members. These wartime veterans, working through 12,000 community-level posts, dedicate themselves to God and Country and traditional American values; strong national security; adequate and compassionate care for veterans, their widows and orphans; community service; and the wholesome development of our nation's youth.

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Copyright 2021 by The American Legion

The American Legion (ISSN 0886-1234) is published monthly by The American Legion, 5745 Lee Road, Indianapolis, IN 46216. Periodicals postage paid at Indianapolis, IN 46204 and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The American Legion, Data Services, P.O. Box 1954, Indianapolis, IN 46206.
Canada Post International Publications Mail (Canadian Distribution) Sales Agreement No. PM40063731. Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses to: Station A, P.O. Box, Windsor ON N9A 6J5. Re-entered second-class mail matter at Manila Central Post Office dated Dec. 22, 1991.



Printed in USA
Member Audit Bureau of Circulations

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SUBSCRIPTIONS Free with membership
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Foreign: \$21
Post-sponsored and widows: \$6
Single copies: \$3.50

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'Harvey Pratt's Path of Life'

Jeff Stoffer's article (November) was extremely interesting and well-done. Harvey Pratt exemplifies the warrior spirit, as a Marine, from the tropical heat of Vietnam to the cold weather in Korea, from his jobs as a forensic artist to his memorial projects, and now the National Native American Veterans Memorial. What a journey of talent.

— Julie A. Radosavljevic, Green Bay, Wis.

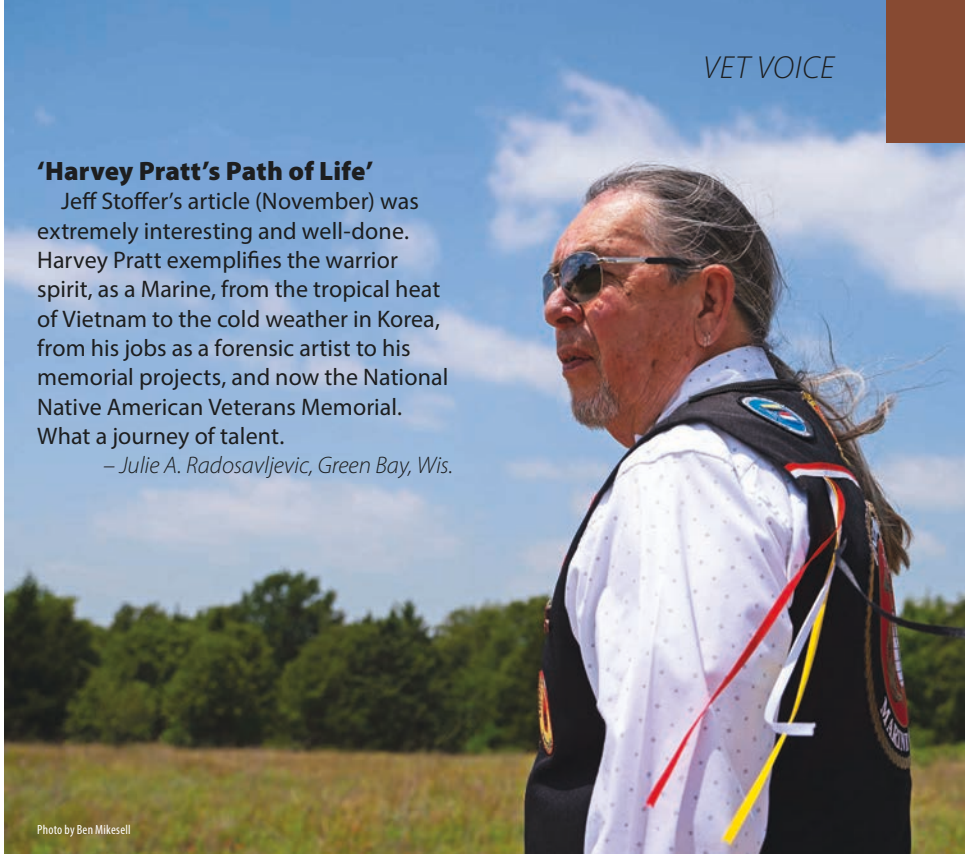


Photo by Ben Mikesell

Thank you for this article. It was fascinating, and I did not know about the National Native American Veterans Memorial. I hope to see it soon.

My father, retired Navy Chief Personnelman Charles Doctor, and my brother, Wayne, were Native American veterans from Seneca Nation, a tribe of the Iroquois in western New York, "Keepers of the Western Door." My father retired in 1966 after swearing in my brother. He grew up on the Tonawanda Reservation. I also had a cousin, a Marine, whose name is etched on the Vietnam Wall.

I loved Harvey Pratt's answer to the question about why Indians fight for this country: "You cry because your heart is broken, because you lost somebody." When he said, "You suffer in silence" – yes. That was my dad and brother. I had tears reading excerpts of this article to my husband, retired Brig. Gen. Tom Kula.

— Robin Doctor Kula, Rockwall, Texas

'The Coldest Battle'

Thank you for Robert Randall Ryder's article (November). Most histories about the Korean War mention only the Marines' experiences at Chosin. Even Charlie Gebhardt's experience was on the eastern side of the mountain range, along with the Marines. What is almost never mentioned is that there was an Army column that moved up the valley on the western side. It made it to the Chosin area and was hit by elements of several Chinese divisions.

My late father-in-law was in that column. Like the Marines, they had to fight their way clear of the Chinese forces, losing many men to both the enemy and the cold. He told me how wonderful the fighter pilots were who did so much damage to the Chinese forces. He believed he, and a lot of others, owed them their lives.

As Gebhardt said, the Army was there, too.

— James Cline, Mexico, Mo.

Editor's note: Gebhardt is buried at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood, Ill.

Statehood for Puerto Rico

As a Puerto Rican Army veteran, I was interested in the debate between Luis Dávila and Javier Hernández (Big Issues, November). I have followed this debate for years without any change in the island's status.

Americans may not know that Spain granted sovereignty to Puerto Rico a couple of weeks before the U.S. military took it during a time of imperialism. That was 1898. We're in 2021 now, and it is still perceived as a "territory," as if frozen in time. Does Dávila really believe that with statehood another star will be sewn into the American flag? I doubt it. And does Hernández believe that if Puerto Rico is granted independence, it will have the effective leadership to run the country? I wonder.

—Leonard P. Campos, Roseville, Calif.

I had never thought much about Puerto Rican statehood, and didn't really care much. But this article opened my eyes. I am now definitely against it.

—Ogden C. Usher, Johnson City, Tenn.

The question of Puerto Rican statehood is exceedingly thought-provoking. Having spent 18 years in Puerto Rico, first as an IBM employee from 1978 to 1984, then as treasurer of Children's Intellectual Center, Inc., from 1992 to 2004, I fully support the views of Luis Dávila, with the exception of his reference to "democracy" (mob

rule). See Article IV, Section 4 of the Constitution, in which "(t)he United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government, and shall protect each of them against Invasion"

In my opinion, the vast majority of puertorriqueños are people of good character and have high respect for these United States and if they direct their domestic legislatures to request it, are fully deserving of the benefits of statehood.

A few decades ago, some members of the legislature of the Republic of China (Taiwan/Formosa) suggested they become a state of our American republic. Though I have no experience with that free republic, I believe Congress should fully consider such a request, if it becomes a majority appeal.

—A. Benton Edmons, Navarre, Ohio

Statehood for Puerto Rico has been a main topic in island politics since the arrival of Gen. Nelson Miles in 1898. Javier Hernández fails to recognize that independence for the island has been supported only by 2.3 percent of the over 2 million local electorate in the past 10 elections. Over 97 percent of the Puerto Ricans living on the island cherish U.S. citizenship and the responsibilities that go with it. The real argument between those who support the current colonial status and those who support statehood regards mostly economic factors (jobs and better opportunities for business).

—Jaime Miranda, Kissimmee, Fla.

In praise of public schools

The brief on homeschooling during the pandemic (Rapid Fire, November) lists statistics about the growth of homeschooling inquiries to the National Home Educators Research Institute, then ends on a comment I found almost offensive. Your space could have been put to better use reviewing the extensive, successful efforts of our public schools to provide our children with the best educational resources and processes during these difficult times.

Most parents are not saying, "We are out of here." They are working with the teachers, administrators and local public health officials to create and enhance effective educational models, be they online, in hybrid situations, and even full time where it is safe.

—Mary Ellen Brooks, Lompoc, Calif.

Well done

As a member of The American Legion, I've been receiving the magazine for 18 years now, and I have to say the November issue was one of the best. I believe it's the first time I've read every article. I especially enjoyed "Harvey Pratt's Path of Life" and "Dams in Distress."

—Tom Grezek, Woodbury, Minn.

The November issue was very good. The Commander's Message was timely and well-stated. The four main articles were about meaningful topics, and were well-written and informative. The tidbits were clear and concise.

—Lewis Hodge, Knoxville, Tenn.

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Our priorities for the next Congress

In the 1972 film “The Candidate,” Robert Redford’s character, Bill McKay, memorably concludes his successful Senate campaign by asking his adviser, “What do we do now?”

For incoming members of Congress with the same question, I suggest they remember the men and women who help make free elections possible: our nation’s veterans. Despite partisan divisions that dominated the daily news cycle in 2019 and 2020, the 116th Congress passed several bills improving the lives of those who served in uniform. And yet, much work remains:

- The American Legion supports a “Buddy Check Week,” designated by VA to increase its outreach and education concerning peer wellness checks. It is a tragedy every time a veteran takes his or her life. Buddy checks are a lifeline to those contemplating suicide, as well as a tangible expression of thanks from a grateful nation.
- Congress must fully fund the VA system, so that it is not only able to provide high-quality health care to America’s heroes but prepared to serve the public during any national emergency.
- The American Legion calls on lawmakers to propose and approve a constitutional amendment that would allow Congress to prohibit the physical desecration of the U.S. flag.
- Congress should recognize that a strong national defense isn’t simply good policy but a constitutional responsibility. This includes developing the most advanced weaponry and giving America’s all-volunteer force the necessary incentives to recruit and retain top talent.
- The American Legion supports legislation that mandates all federal agencies adopt and enforce a “Buy American” policy. We believe in policies that incentivize the return of manufacturing jobs from overseas and the creation of similar opportunities here at home.

The American Legion’s legislative program is ambitious. At any given time, the national organization has approximately 200 active resolutions with legislative intent. These resolutions originate at the grassroots level, among our members, and are passed by delegates to the national convention or the Legion’s National Executive Committee.

From supporting secure borders to pushing for greater employment opportunities for military spouses, The American Legion has many positions, all of which are rooted in our organization’s motto: “Veterans Strengthening America.”

To learn where The American Legion stands on a particular issue, go to [legion.org/resolutions](https://www.legion.org/resolutions). Members of Congress know the influence The American Legion holds, which is why we have a long track record of getting veteran-friendly laws enacted.

The American Legion is absolutely not political or partisan, but it has a great stake in government policies. When it comes to advocating for the well-being of this nation and those who have served it during wartime, our elected officials will find The American Legion to be an effective and powerful ally.

James W. “Bill” Oxford



National Commander
James W. “Bill” Oxford

MEMORANDA

BASEBALL REGISTRATION

Registration for American Legion Baseball teams begins Jan. 1. Teams must be registered to participate in the 2021 season.

baseball.legion.org

LEGACY SCHOLARSHIPS

Jan. 1 is also the opening day for applications for the American Legion Legacy Scholarship, which provides college funding for children of post-9/11 veterans who died on active duty or have a combined VA disability rating of 50 percent or greater. The application period runs through April 15.

legion.org/scholarships/legacy

THE LEGION ON LINKEDIN

The American Legion’s LinkedIn page has topped 20,000 followers. The page’s audience has steadily grown since an overhaul in 2014, when it had about 2,000 followers. As part of The American Legion’s collection of social media platforms, the organization’s LinkedIn page shares a variety of stories of interest to veterans and the American Legion Family, as well as job fair information, career advice and other topics.

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American Legion Past National

Commander Fang A. Wong, during a ceremony Nov. 17 to present the organization’s prestigious Patriot Award to **Syracuse University’s Institute for Veterans and Military Families**. The award presentation, streamed live from Syracuse, N.Y., included remarks from IVMF founder and Syracuse University Vice Chancellor for Strategic Initiatives and Innovation Mike Haynie, who said he hopes the award will be “a springboard” to an enduring relationship between The American Legion and the IVMF, “working together to empower those who have served across every dimension of their post-service life.”

Watch video of Haynie talking about the Patriot Award: [youtube.com/americanlegionhq](https://www.youtube.com/americanlegionhq)



Photo by Zachary Krahmer

► 176

Jobseekers, including one still serving in Japan, who tuned in for a virtual American Legion career fair Nov. 17 for veterans, military personnel and spouses. The online event, which featured 44 employers, was presented by the **American Legion Veterans Employment & Education Commission** and the **American Legion Department of North Carolina**.

3,683

American Legion posts that conducted **Buddy Check** programs in 2019 and 2020, with 71 percent submitting Consolidated Post Reports by the end of the membership year

► 1,000

Minimum number of free rides provided last year by **Stanley American Legion Post 20 in Fort Pierre, S.D.**, for veterans in highly rural areas to make it to their VA medical appointments. Funding for the transportation program was made possible through a Department of Veterans Affairs Highly Rural Transportation Grant.



Photo by T.J. Kirkpatrick

“Every veteran – regardless of their branch or time in service – gave up a portion of their lives in service to our great country. Ceremonies like those attended today reinforce the thanks of a grateful nation.”

American Legion National Vice Commander Frank MacDonald, after Veterans Day wreath-laying ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery and the National Korean War Memorial

► \$150,000

Estimated amount raised for The American Legion’s Veterans & Children Foundation by the **100 Miles for Hope Challenge** that ended Nov. 11. A total of 4,823 participants walked, rode, swam, paddled or propelled themselves as they saw fit, 100 or more miles in 100 days or less, and shared their stories on **legion.org/legiontown**. Plans are underway for a second challenge in 2021.



Photo courtesy Skydive Baltimore

"It was just a thrilling experience. I was never frightened. At one point, I got confused. I think I had thought you'd just be coming down with your body straight. I didn't think about the fact that the air would have something to do with it. The air was tumbling us around. I felt like I was alone, and I thought, 'Where in the heck did the (instructor) go?' Of course, I was strapped to him, so I wasn't alone. That was the only time I was confused."

Army World War II veteran and Paid Up For Life (PUFL) American Legion member Millie Bailey of **Adams, Hanna, Moore Memorial Post 156 in Ellicott City, Md.**, who scratched a challenge off her bucket list by jumping out of an airplane in October with a Skydive Maryland instructor. The feat was featured Nov. 11 on the American Heroes Channel. She is 102 years old.

► 8

Former **American Legion Baseball** players on the ballot for 2021 induction into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y. Inductees are expected to be announced Jan. 26.



► 820

Schools eligible to receive free U.S. flags in a joint mission between the **American Legion Department of Montana** and the state's Office of Public Instruction, thanks to a department resolution, originating at **Andrew Pearson American Legion Post 117 in Billings**, that passed in September.



National Museum of the United States Army

The American Legion-supported National Museum of the United States Army officially opened Nov. 11 at Fort Belvoir, Va. The 84-acre museum campus honors the service and sacrifice of more than 30 million men and women who have worn the Army uniform since 1775. The American Legion has supported through national resolutions the building of the museum since 2005. The \$200 million venue – with artifacts, documents, equipment, art and weapons never been seen before by the public – was both privately and publicly funded.

FROM NATIONAL TO YOU

Training Tuesdays

The American Legion Internal Affairs Commission and the national Membership & Post Activities Committee offer monthly online training sessions to help officers and members understand and conduct services of the organization.

Training Tuesday sessions are recorded for online viewing at **legion.org/training**. Previous sessions available now include:

► **Buddy Checks:** This session examines the who, what, where, when and why of the program and discusses the importance of contacting and taking care of our fellow veterans.

► **myLegion.org:** With a new platform rollout underway, this session helps post leaders understand new features in membership management and other administrative operations.

► **Post administration:** American Legion Department of Maryland Adjutant Russell Myers explains what it takes to be a successful post adjutant.

► **Helping Veterans:** This session, recorded Dec. 29, 2020, shares details about The American Legion's National Emergency Fund, Temporary Financial Assistance program, Mission Blue Post Assistance Program and Operation Comfort Warriors.

► A Jan. 26 session is set to discuss how to best represent the American Legion brand. Monthly online Training Tuesdays sessions will continue into 2021, using Microsoft Teams.

 legion.org/training/training-tuesdays

American Legion College

The COVID-19 pandemic forced American Legion College to postpone its 2020 session – usually conducted in November – until March 2021. The deadline has passed for applications for the coming training session, but plans are already in the works to resume the program at its usual time next fall.

 legion.org/college

Training Newsletters

American Legion training newsletters going back to 2017 may be viewed or downloaded by visiting legion.org/training. Also available on the platform is useful information for veterans who seek to charter new American Legion posts in their communities.

Statehood for Washington, D.C.



SUPPORT

Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, D-D.C.

■ Holmes Norton is a member of the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

If statehood were awarded on the basis of merit, the District of Columbia would have become a state long ago.

When I was first elected as a Democratic delegate to the House of Representatives in the early 1990s, I got the first-ever House vote on statehood. That vote did not prevail because the Democratic House majority was dominated by more conservative Southern Democrats.

During most of my service since, I have been in the House minority, but I took full advantage of the House majority Democrats won in 2018 and got a huge majority vote for statehood (232-180), most of them co-sponsors of the bill as well.

There are no requirements for statehood, but the District of Columbia has long met the criteria usually considered: population, resources and support. Perhaps foremost, the district ranks first in federal taxes per capita paid to support the country, pays more in total federal taxes than 22 states, and has roughly the same population as six states. Washington, D.C., has a bigger budget than 12 states and its triple-A bond rating outranks that of 35 states.

The House vote for statehood this year gives the district a head start in the Senate. With more than 100 national and local organizations already working for D.C. statehood in the Senate and 90 percent of Senate Democrats co-sponsoring the bill as of November, D.C. is perfectly positioned for statehood.



OPPOSE

Rep. Robert B. Aderholt, R-Ala.

■ Aderholt is a member of the House Committee on Appropriations.

When our founding fathers established our republic, they knew the balance between the rights of the federal and state governments would be delicate. It was vital that the system give each state certain rights and powers in shaping the country and representing the people.

The debates were heated, with pivotal figures such as Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton having different philosophies on the form the new nation should take. That is why our

republic is worth fighting for, why our balance of power is worth preserving, and why I do not believe in tipping the scales for the sake of wishful thinking. Because of this, I voted against giving the District of Columbia statehood.

The founders intentionally did not grant the District of Columbia statehood so that no state would house the Capitol and perhaps have undue influence over the federal government. They realized that a state made up almost entirely of government employees and lobbyists would be a massive conflict of interest, and having the same rights as other states would only encourage corruption, centralize power and destabilize the equality of individual states in Congress.

How would two additional senators represent a constituency that is, quite literally, the federal government? The founding fathers had it right. The idea of granting it statehood is a direct affront to our system of government. Opposing D.C. statehood should not be a partisan stance. It is simply the right stance.

THE HEART OF THE ISSUE

In June, the House of Representatives voted to make the District of Columbia the 51st state, which would allow it two senators and a voting representative in the House. Critics say the legislation is unconstitutional.

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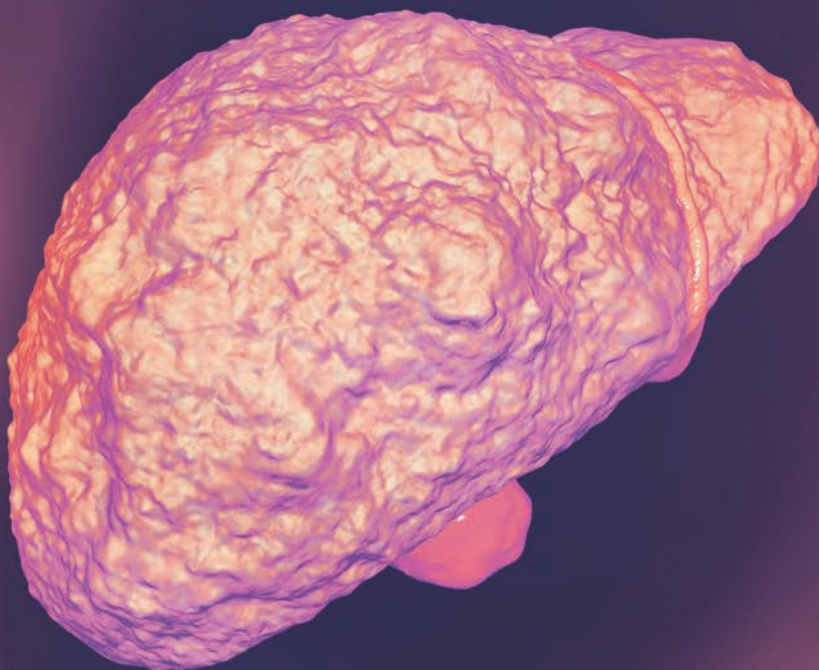
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SILENT EPIDEMIC

VA takes steps for early detection of fatty liver disease among veterans.

BY STEPHEN HARRISON



Media Bakery

A poor diet, obesity and a sedentary lifestyle have serious health consequences, including certain cancers, anxiety and depression, coronary disease and high blood pressure. What is becoming equally alarming is the recognized link between obesity and liver disease.

The devastating effect of obesity on vital organs, especially the liver, is documented: it can precipitate insulin resistance, resulting in a buildup of blood sugar and an increase in the amount of free fatty acids circulating in the blood and inside the liver cells.

A buildup of fat in the liver is common in those with type 2 diabetes, increasing the risk of liver fibrosis, cirrhosis or liver cancer. Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) has been found to be a strong and independent risk factor for pre-diabetes in the general adult population.

Living Well is designed to provide general information. It is not intended to be, nor is it, medical advice. Readers should consult their physicians when they have health problems.

What is fatty liver disease?

When the liver stops working, it accumulates toxins and fails to digest food, and medications stay

in the body longer than needed. NAFLD can lead to a more serious state of disease called fibrosis – scarring of the liver – or to cirrhosis, which can lead to liver failure.

This silent epidemic affects millions of Americans and imposes a significant financial burden on the U.S. health-care system. The American Liver Foundation estimates that about 100 million Americans – over 30 percent of the U.S. population – have NAFLD, the most common type of liver disease in the Western world.

In a 2017 report, VA estimated 78 percent of veterans were overweight or obese, making NAFLD a particular concern within the Veterans Health Administration (VHA).

A 2018 study published in the *World Journal of Gastroenterology* found that fatty liver disease is present in 47.5 percent of patients who have cured their hepatitis C virus (HCV), with some experiencing ongoing clinically significant fibrosis, despite normalizing liver enzymes. Between 2000 and 2017, the military saw a 12-fold increase in the number of active military diagnosed with NAFLD, which is recognized by VA as a growing disease that requires immediate action.

See **LIVER DISEASE** on page 16

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[‡]For a complete description of Veterans Affairs coverage criteria and additional information, please see the Department of Veterans Affairs Criteria for Use Memorandum, January 31, 2019. A patient must be seen at a VA healthcare facility or a VA Community Care Network clinic to be eligible to receive coverage.

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LIVER DISEASE *continued from page 14*

The good news is that VA recently cured 100,000 veterans of HCV, and has now taken its first step in tackling the NAFLD epidemic by adopting the latest technology to improve access to non-invasive liver assessment and early detection of NAFLD.

Prevention and early detection Most liver disease is avoidable, and health-care providers have new tools that provide rapid, painless and consistent results that enable them to make the most informed treatment decisions. These also eliminate the need for an expensive liver needle biopsy or other invasive testing.

During an annual physical or appointment with your primary care physician, ask about a liver screening and learn as much as you can about how to avoid liver disease. FibroScan 430 mini+ portable technology from Echosens, for instance, is a rapid and painless approach to screening that can be performed in the doctor's office as part of

an annual exam, and is covered by Medicare, Medicaid and most insurance plans. A growing number of VA facilities has access to FibroScan technology.

Ask your physician how a 10-minute screening can quantitatively estimate liver fat content and liver stiffness. Test scores provide immediate information the physician can use at the point of care to make a referral to a specialist or recommend additional assessments.

As awareness about non-alcoholic fatty liver disease increases, the Department of Defense – the nation's largest public health-care provider – is well positioned to address these challenges and help prevent fatal liver damage among the nation's veterans.

Stephen Harrison, M.D., is a gastroenterologist and hepatologist, medical director of Pinnacle Clinical Research, and visiting professor of hepatology at the University of Oxford.



Thank the bees

Honey may be more effective at treating coughs, stuffy noses and sore throats caused by upper respiratory tract infections (URTIs) than more artificial treatments, according to a recent University of Oxford study.

Though honey has long been used as a home remedy to treat coughs and colds, only recently has evidence for its effectiveness for upper respiratory tract symptoms in adults been examined. According to the *Guardian*, the Oxford research team looked at relevant studies “comparing honey and preparations that included it ... with usual care” – treatments such as antihistamines, expectorants, cough suppressants and painkillers.

Honey is more effective than common alternatives, “avoids harm through antimicrobial resistance,” and is well known, cheap and accessible. “When clinicians wish to prescribe for URTI, we would recommend honey as an alternative to antibiotics,” the team concluded.



There will be a
COVID boom of
babies in the
spring.

Donna Staton, president of the Novant Health UVA Health System's Culpeper Medical Center in Culpeper, Va. The facility is preparing for 70 births in both January and February – nine months after the pandemic took hold in spring 2020 – compared to 45 in a typical month. *Source: Culpeper Star-Exponent*



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Shield & Storm

The Gulf War signaled a revolution in armed conflict 30 years ago this month.

BY RICHARD A. LACQUEMENT JR.

The Gulf War was a major success for the U.S. military. An extraordinarily professional band of well-led soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines delivered battlefield victory using an impressive array of weapons and other equipment within a formidable coalition of allies and partners.

It is worthwhile to look back and recognize what a powerful moment the Gulf War represented for the American profession of arms, think about what we can still learn from the conflict, and be conscious of the many ways that national security and military affairs have evolved from that war in the intervening 30 years.

THE WAR The Gulf War began with the unwarranted Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on Aug. 2, 1990 – an act of aggression that shocked the world. Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi dictator, launched a sharp campaign that overwhelmed Kuwait in just a few days and put Iraqi military forces on the border

with Saudi Arabia, poised for potential further aggression. The Kuwaiti government fled to exile in Saudi Arabia. Iraqis pillaged Kuwait and seized hostages, including noncombatants from the United States and other countries.

President George H.W. Bush made it clear that Iraqi aggression would not stand. He moved swiftly to lay the diplomatic, economic and military groundwork for a strategy to back up his words. Diplomatic negotiations led to Saudi Arabia's request for U.S. forces to assist in its defense. U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine and Coast Guard units deployed to the region after Operation Desert Shield started Aug. 8. Military coalition partners from NATO, such as the United Kingdom and France, and

.....
ABOVE: A Navy F-14A Tomcat from Fighter Squadron 211 out of Naval Air Station Oceana in Virginia Beach, Va., flies over burning Kuwaiti oil wells during Operation Desert Storm on Feb. 1, 1991. National Archives

forces from regional partners like Egypt and Syria, joined the United States and Saudi Arabia in defense.

Economic and financial support from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Germany and Japan, among other nations, was instrumental to coalition efforts. Deft U.S. diplomacy gained U.N. approval – including support from the Soviet Union – for the restoration of Kuwaiti sovereignty and biting economic sanctions against Iraq.

After Iraq failed to meet the Jan. 15, 1991, deadline for withdrawal set by the United Nations, the coalition launched Operation Desert Storm. Coalition forces unleashed a devastating air campaign that battered Iraqi strategic, operational and tactical targets. Iraqi efforts to hit back at the coalition and to goad Israel into fighting relied heavily on their intimidating but largely ineffective Scud missiles. Iraq's late-January ground attack toward the Saudi town of Khafji, intended to seize the initiative and induce a broader ground war, was quickly put down by allied air and ground counterattacks.

After more than five weeks of coalition air attacks and the menace of potential amphibious assault from Marine Corps and Navy forces in the Persian Gulf, the coalition hurled a multi-corps attack at Iraqi forces Feb. 24. In a 100-hour ground campaign that charged forward relentlessly under an umbrella of air superiority, allied forces destroyed, captured or routed Iraqi military formations and liberated Kuwait. Bush called an end to combat operations, later formalized in an armistice March 3.

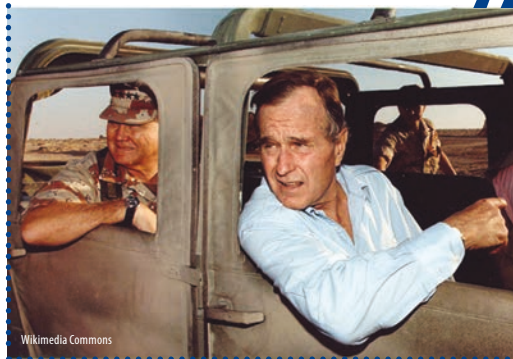
REASONS FOR SUCCESS The outcome of Desert Storm gave the United States and its partners much to be proud of. The U.S. military, largely rebuilt in the wake of the Vietnam War, was a marvel of technological sophistication. Excellent weapons systems on the ground, at sea and in the air – such as M1 Abrams main battle tanks, Patriot missile systems, Apache helicopters, F-117 stealth fighters, air- and sea-launched cruise missiles, and Navy carrier strike groups – were supplemented by unmatched space-based resources, including the satellite-enabled Global Positioning System (GPS) that revolutionized navigation and targeting. The coalition's astonishingly effective naval, air and ground forces overwhelmed what had been the world's fourth-largest military and one of the most combat-experienced (due to the eight-year war with Iran that ended in 1988).

On paper, the Iraqi military – particularly its air force and army – was large and technologically advanced. It's worth remembering that Iraqi forces were similarly and sometimes even better equipped than the coalition, given the vast array of capable platforms largely acquired from the USSR, the People's Republic of China and other communist bloc countries.

Before the coalition launched combat operations, the daunting nature of Iraq's well-entrenched defensive – supported by heavily armored ground forces (such as the

Some may ask: Why act now? Why not wait? The answer is clear: The world could wait no longer. Sanctions, though having some effect, showed no signs of accomplishing their objective I am convinced not only that we will prevail but that out of the horror of combat will come the recognition that no nation can stand against a world united, no nation will be permitted to brutally assault its neighbor.

President George H.W. Bush, in an address to the nation Jan. 16, 1991



The **Desert Shield airlift** transported troops and supplies from 120 locations around the world, exceeding the tonnage of the 1948-1949 Berlin Airlift in 22 days.

39 Nations in the Allied coalition

697,000 U.S. troops deployed to the Persian Gulf region for Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm

382 U.S. military casualties

116,000+ U.S. and coalition combat air sorties

100 Hours spent on a ground campaign before Kuwait was liberated



American Legion Archives

You are America's best, and we are proud of you. Long after these worrisome days have passed, your courage and dedication to your country will be remembered.

American Legion National Commander Robert Turner, speaking to deployed U.S. servicemembers in the March 1991 *American Legion Magazine*

A NEW GENERATION OF WARTIME VETERANS

On Sept. 4, 1991, delegates to the 73rd American Legion National Convention in Phoenix unanimously passed Resolution 1, urging Congress to amend the Legion's constitution to expand eligibility to anyone who served on active military duty from Aug. 2, 1990, "to the date of cessation of hostilities as determined by the government of the United States."

FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK

In September 1990, the American Legion Family Support Network (FSN) was formed to provide volunteer help for families of U.S. military personnel deployed to the Middle East. By calling a national toll-free number, families were connected to local American Legion Family members for assistance with child care, lawn work, auto maintenance and household needs.

American Legion National Commander Robert Turner visited U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia to spread the word about the program, and directed thousands of copies of *The American Legion Magazine* – with details of how to request assistance – be sent to servicemembers.

Throughout the post-9/11 era, the Legion's Family Support Network has continued to support military families during deployments.

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American Legion Archives

Republican Guards), advanced fighter aircraft and Scud missiles – led to casualty estimates of tens of thousands of anticipated dead and wounded. But Iraqi forces miserably failed in their efforts to defend against coalition attacks. Coalition casualties – all certainly regrettable – were far lower than even the most favorable projections.

The primary reason for the disparity points to the United States' and its coalition partners' most spectacular advantage: the astonishingly well-trained and well-educated professionals who were the heart and soul of the coalition. The Iraqis were vastly overmatched by the commitment and talent of the people who integrated ground, sea, air and space operations to overwhelm Iraqi forces with dilemmas they could not resolve.

For Americans in particular, success in the Gulf War was an indicator of a tremendous renewal of military competence since the Vietnam War. Gens. Colin Powell and Norman Schwarzkopf were among many Vietnam-era leaders who helped overcome the military hollowness of the 1970s, developed an all-volunteer force following the end

of the draft in 1973, built new formations and developed professionals – officers, NCOs and junior enlisted – who succeeded in the Gulf War. Concepts such as the Army and Air Force "Airland Battle" unhinged Iraqi plans. Exceptional strategic mobility on the sea and in the air enabled assembly of forces in northern Saudi Arabia (initially for defense and eventually for offense). Thoughtful diplomacy built a broad coalition to compel Iraqi compliance with U.N. resolutions. Economic sanctions continued to squeeze Iraqi options. Information operations isolated Iraq.

The Gulf War was also an important test case for jointness. Improved planning, deployment, coordination and operation of U.S. forces were in part due to advancements driven by the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act that, among other things, strengthened the Joint Staff and empowered better joint leadership by the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and combatant commanders. During Desert Shield and Desert Storm, the positive effect of Goldwater-Nichols was quite heartening. This was true of the chairman's

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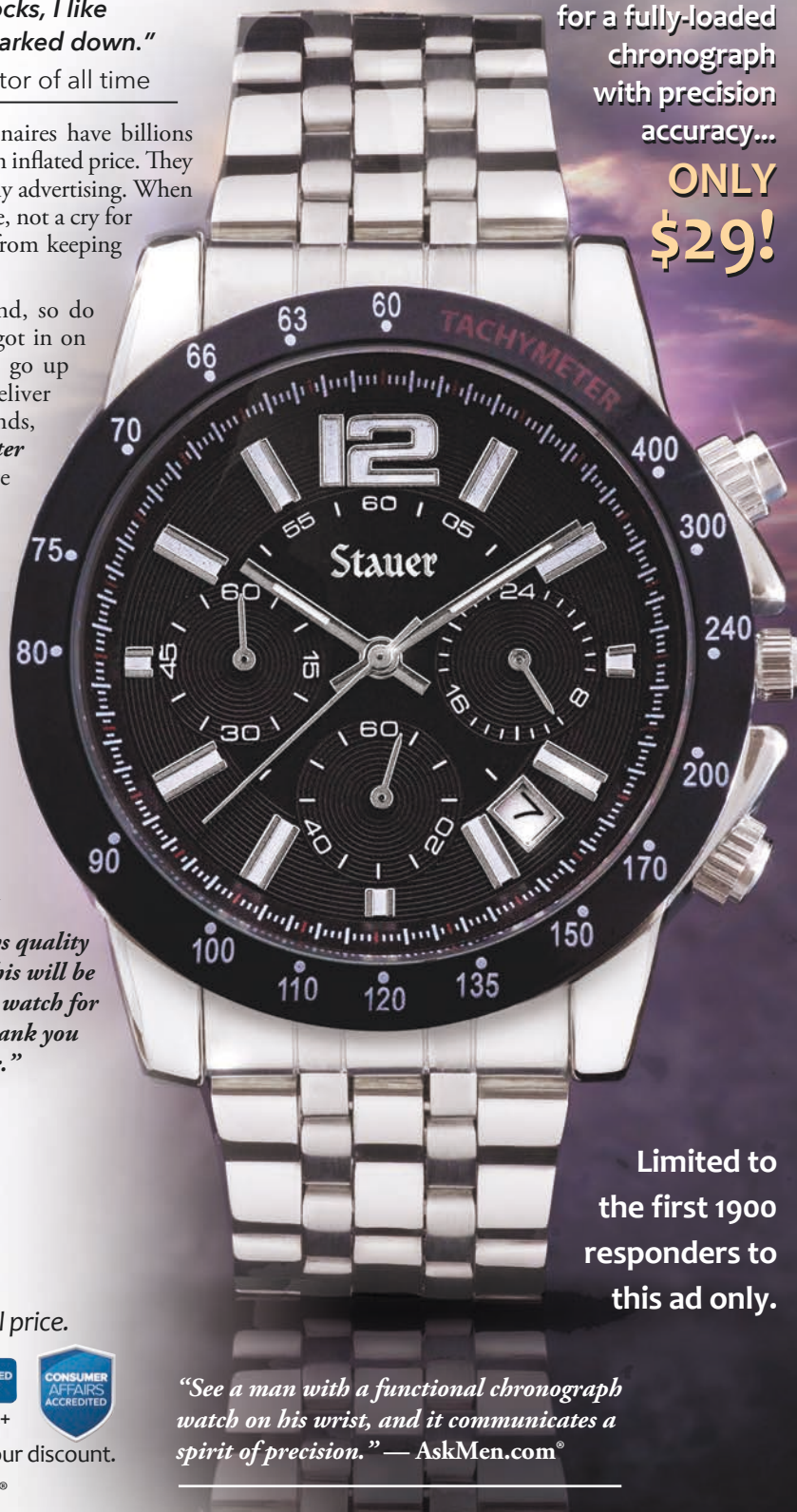


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(Powell's) enhanced leadership in the D.C.-based policy world, as well as in the authority of the regional combatant commander (Schwarzkopf) to organize and command forces in the Middle East.

POSTWAR ISSUES As successful as the United States and its allies were in punishing aggression, liberating Kuwait and improving regional stability, the Gulf War served as an important inflection point in the evolution of the character not only of this war, but of warfare itself. The sense of how armed conflict might be changing took on even greater significance as the Soviet Union, the United States' Cold War adversary, collapsed post-Gulf War.

Although Saddam's regime survived, coalition forces continued to provide military containment that eventually included no-fly zones over northern and southern Iraq. Furthermore, economic sanctions continued, and an intrusive weapon of mass destruction (WMD) inspection program was created to force Iraqi compliance with U.N. resolutions.

Many saw the war as evidence of a revolution in military affairs, including dramatic advancements in the networked use of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) platforms, stealth technology, satellite guidance, precision strike and overall power projection. The lopsided results against Iraq seemed to provide powerful deterrence for those who might wish to challenge the U.S. military.

In the following decade, there was little or no evidence of decline in U.S. military advantages. Combat operations in Afghanistan (2001) and in Iraq (2003) provided swift and satisfying successes. Nonetheless, efforts to consolidate battlefield gains were much more ambiguous in these post-9/11 wars. Efforts to build and sustain local self-



As far as Saddam Hussein being a great military strategist, he is neither a strategist, nor is he schooled in the operational arts, nor is he a tactician, nor is he a general, nor is he a soldier. Other than that, he's a great military man. I want you to know that.

Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf,
commander of allied forces in the Persian Gulf,
at a Feb. 28, 1991, press conference

DoD estimates the **cost of the Gulf War** at \$61 billion, with Gulf states contributing \$36 billion and Germany and Japan chipping in \$16 billion. As a percent of gross domestic product (0.3%), **Desert Storm** is the least expensive war in U.S. history.

among others); and to develop or expand WMD capabilities, such as North Korea's efforts to build nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles.

Additionally, the absence of significant irregular warfare in the Gulf War (in contrast to Vietnam) left an open question about whether the United States was as capable against irregular or counterinsurgency warfare that appears to undergird challenges that future adversaries in Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq tried to exploit.

LEGACY Success in the Gulf War was impressive and instructive. It also played an important role in my own life. As a junior field artillery captain in the Army's 1st Armored Division, I was in the midst of the storm that swept Iraqi forces out of Kuwait. I was proud to be a bit player enfolded in the joint, multinational team that engineered a winning feat and brought me home safely. It is also deeply sobering to remember, with gratitude and humility, our compatriots who made the ultimate sacrifice doing what our nation asked of them.

As much as I could see and appreciate firsthand at

governance in the wake of regime change deteriorated into confounding counterinsurgency campaigns in both countries.

In the wake of the Gulf War, Russia, China, Iran, North Korea, Islamists and other potential adversaries took note of U.S. strengths and potential weaknesses as they adapted their own forces and strategies.

Asymmetric approaches included attempts to deny U.S. forces air and sea mobility to access potential conflict areas; to oppose the United States and its allies with hybrid or grayzone challenges such as cyber intrusions, proxy attacks and social media exploitation (by Russia, China and Iran,

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This time we would try to do it right, we were trying to do it with the right blend of political objectives, decisive military means and making sure that when we had accomplished that objective, we would know it and we would stop the war. The American people understood that, they supported it, and they saw political and military leaders who seemed to know what they were doing.

Gen. Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in PBS' "Frontline" Gulf War oral history

the time, it was hard to fathom the entirety of the war, including the legacy of countless veterans who made our success possible. In the years since, in other units, in other combat zones, in training exercises and in the halls of education, the 1991 Gulf War has proven to be an enduring, albeit incomplete, touchstone that resonates with both positive and cautionary lessons. Thirty years on, it's still worth honoring, analyzing and revisiting.

The growth and professional rebirth of the U.S. military after Vietnam was remarkable. But success provides no grounds for complacency. In the facet most central to success – the incredible spirit, competence and commitment of American military professionals – the United States continues to hold superiority over potential adversaries. This is a powerful heritage of those who served and those who continue to serve. 🌿

Richard A. Lacquement Jr., Ph.D., is research professor of national security affairs in the Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute. He is a retired Army colonel (field artillery and strategist) with combat experience in Desert Shield/Storm (1990-1991), Iraq (2003) and Afghanistan (2010-2011). He has been a professor at West Point, the Naval War College and the Army War College, including eight years as dean of the latter's School of Strategic Landpower.

The opinions expressed in this essay do not represent those of the Army War College, the Department of Defense or any part of the U.S. government.

TO EDUCATE AND TO HONOR

The National Desert Storm and Desert Shield Memorial in Washington, D.C., is nearing final design approval, but requires nearly \$20 million more in fundraising before the project can break ground.

Located at 23rd Street and Constitution Avenue – just north of the Lincoln Memorial and a short walk from the Vietnam Wall – the memorial will commemorate the Gulf War's historical significance, as well as honor the hundreds of thousands of U.S. and coalition military personnel who served and helped liberate Kuwait.

The estimated cost to build the Desert Storm memorial is \$40 million. More than \$9.2 million has been raised, with an additional \$10 million pledge from Kuwait.

In 2017, The American Legion passed a resolution supporting the memorial's construction.

Go to the National Desert Storm War Memorial Association's website, ndswm.org, to donate and learn more about the memorial's history and design.



Photo courtesy National Desert Storm War Memorial Association

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GAME CHANGER

After billions of dollars and years of failed attempts, the DoD/VA electronic medical record is finally coming online.

BY KEN OLSEN

More than 16 years after she retired from the Army, Easter Iuli is still trying to locate medical records from her 10-year military career. She's even gone to Madigan Army Medical Center in western Washington to request the documents, which are essential for anyone who wants to sign up for VA care and benefits. But her files have not yet been transferred from Madigan to VA's American Lake Medical Center, a mere seven miles away.

"It's very frustrating," says Iuli, who works as a veterans service officer for the American Legion Department of Washington. It's also the sort of problem faced by a majority of the veterans she encounters in her work.

A solution may finally be at hand. On Oct. 24, the Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center in Spokane became the first of the agency's health-care centers to deploy a new electronic health record that is compatible with a similar system DoD began rolling out at military bases in 2017.

The Spokane-area hospital and clinics serve approximately 24,000 primary care patients.

The new electronic health record will include medical history of patients from the time they enter military service throughout their VA care, according to Susan Carter, director of VA's media relations office. Information about allergies,

medications and past medical procedures are also part of the new common medical record. And over the next year, the agency will incorporate lab results, radiology reports and other information from its old records to the new system.

"I think this is going to be a huge game changer," Iuli says. "This will help us do our job effectively for the veterans. (And) VA will be able to look up their records immediately."

The American Legion has long called for an integrated health record that seamlessly follows servicemembers from the military into VA care. That should reduce the number of VA claims denied for veterans who can't produce their records. It also has the potential to improve claims-processing time, reduce medical errors such as adverse drug interactions, give VA physicians more information about patient illnesses, injuries and allergies, and make it easier to access information from private health-care providers. A common DoD/VA electronic health record should also spare former servicemembers from lugging around boxes of documents or jumping through hoops to get copies of the information from the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis or military installations where they received care.

"It's particularly difficult to get medical records from Germany," Iuli says. That's noteworthy given

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PAINFUL JOURNEY DoD and VA are on track to spend as much as \$20 billion and nearly 20 years bringing the new health record system online at all their medical facilities. The agencies began discussing a transferrable medical record as early as the late 1990s. Then, in 2009, President Barack Obama directed them to develop an integrated electronic lifetime record that included medical and administrative information. Four years and more than \$1 billion later, DoD and VA abandoned that effort but pledged to continue working to develop a database both departments could use to access health-care information about servicemembers and veterans.

That generated widespread criticism. “The decision by DoD and VA to turn their backs on a truly integrated electronic health record system is deeply troubling,” then-House Veterans’ Affairs Committee Chairman Jeff Miller, R-Fla., told *The Washington Post* in 2013. “The need for a record system integrated across all DoD and VA components has been universally accepted for years.”

The American Legion revisited the issue at its 2016 national convention, with a resolution noting that DoD and VA not only hadn’t delivered on their promise of a common electronic health record, but there was no target date for getting the job done. Meanwhile, an unprecedented number of servicemembers in need of medical care were returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

“Failure to implement a bilateral medical record and Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record to date has caused significant delays in the veterans’ treatment,” the resolution stated.

The American Legion called on DoD and VA to have a Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record in place by fiscal 2017. In addition, the resolution called for the new lifetime record to have a feature allowing a servicemember’s records to be flagged at the time they were injured or became ill to speed up VA claims processing once an individual left the military. (The new electronic health record system does not yet include that feature, according to a DoD spokesman.)

In 2015, DoD awarded a \$4.5 billion contract to the Leidos Partnership for Defense Health to develop its version of the new health record system. It launched the first pilot test of the program at Fairchild Air Force Base near Spokane

in February 2017. The system was installed at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Naval Base Kitsap and Madigan Army Medical Center later that same year. These pilot tests were marked by training glitches and technical problems, according to media reports. But by the time DoD began using the system in California and Idaho in September 2019, it said it had addressed many of the issues.

VA decided to purchase the same baseline computer system in 2018. But the person VA hired to oversee its health record modernization, which is expected to cost \$16.1 billion, left after just a month on the job. That resignation – and other staff turnover – drew Congress’ ire.

“I write with great concern about the deteriorated and rudderless leadership of the Electronic Health Record Modernization (EHRM) Progress,” Rep. Jim Banks, R-Ind., said in an August 2018 letter to VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. Banks cited turnover among VA staff working on the project, noting that “at most, half of the program’s senior leadership positions are occupied and its rank-and-file positions are only sparsely filled. ... This comes at a time when VA is making the most pivotal decision as to the design of the Cerner EHR system,” Banks said. “It would be a tragedy for the program to be undermined by personality conflicts and bureaucratic power struggles before it ever begins in earnest.”

The House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee expressed similar skepticism at a 2019 hearing, where then-acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan was asked to defend the Pentagon’s slow progress, according to Military.com. “For 10 years, we’ve heard the same assurances that the EHR problem will be solved,” Rep. Hal Rogers, R-Ky., said. “It’s incredible we can’t get this fixed.” Veterans are suffering “because of this bureaucratic crap,” he added.

DoD has continued installing the new electronic record at its hospitals and clinics, and expects to have the system up and running at all of its health-care facilities by 2023. VA plans to have the new electronic health record system operating at all of its locations by 2027.

Meanwhile, Iuli and other service officers – as well as current and former servicemembers – are watching to see if the new integrated health record system will live up to its promises. “I’m hoping and praying this will make everybody’s life easier,” she says, “especially veterans.” 🌸

Ken Olsen is a frequent contributor to The American Legion Magazine.

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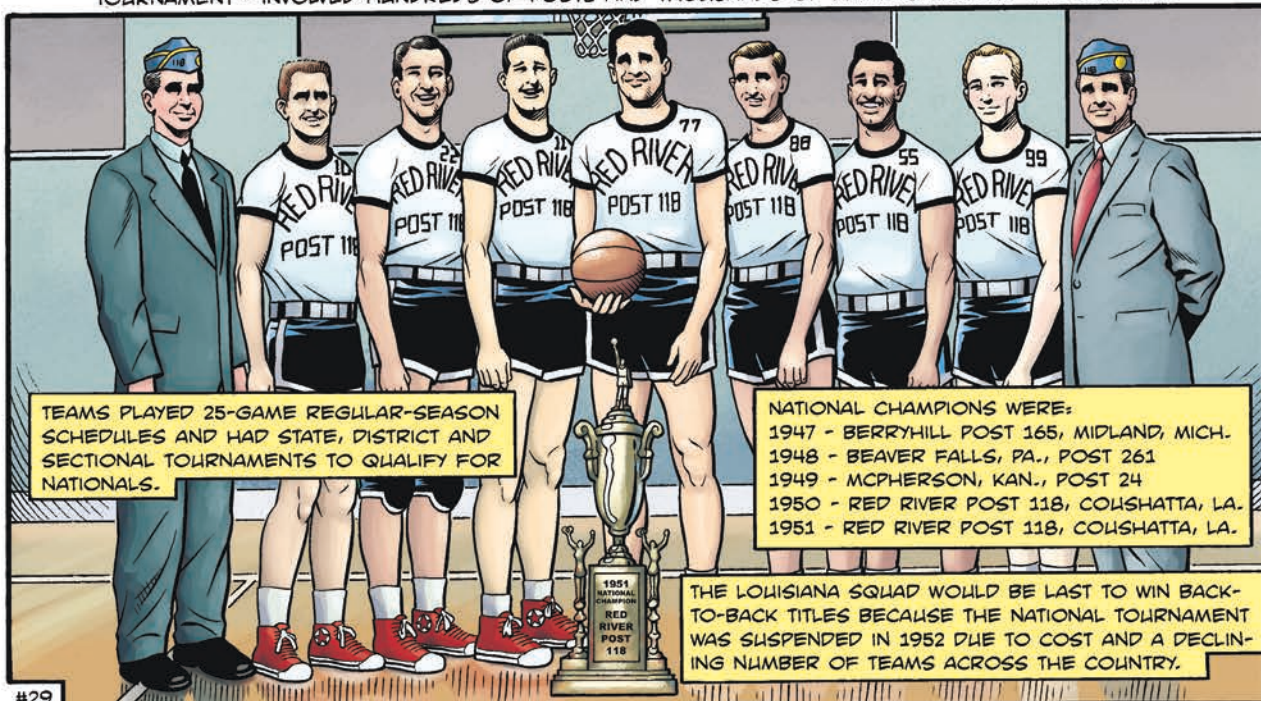
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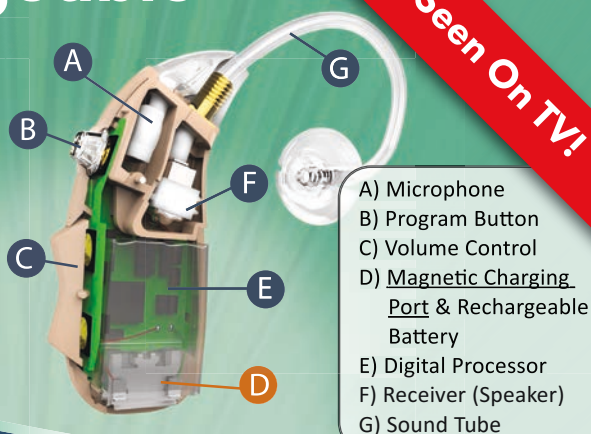
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HONOR & REMEMBRANCE

THE IMMORTAL CHAPLAINS

Feb. 3 is Four Chaplains Day. Established by Congress in 1988, the day honors the selfless sacrifice of four Army chaplains who gave their lives to save others during World War II. In 2019, a minimum of 1,663 American Legion posts nationwide observed Four Chaplains Day by conducting interfaith services, ceremonies or other solemn events. Four Chaplains Day kicks off Religious Emphasis Week, a key part of the Legion's "Service to God and Country" program.

THE STORY

On Feb. 2, 1943, the crowded Army transport *Dorchester* made its way across the North Atlantic toward Greenland, carrying 902 servicemen, merchant seamen and civilian workers. At 12:55 a.m. Feb. 3, a German periscope broke the icy waters. An officer aboard U-223 spotted *Dorchester* and gave orders to fire torpedoes. The blast killed scores of men, and many more were seriously wounded; only 230 were rescued. According to survivors, four Army chaplains brought hope in despair and light in darkness: Lt. George L. Fox (Methodist), Lt. Alexander D. Goode (Jewish), Lt. John P. Washington (Roman Catholic) and Lt. Clark V. Poling (Dutch Reformed). As the ship sank and lifejackets ran out, the chaplains removed theirs and gave them to four frightened young men. Men in nearby rafts saw the chaplains, arms linked and braced against the slanting deck, praying aloud. That night, they became an enduring example of extraordinary faith, courage and selflessness.



THE FOUNDATION

The mission of the Four Chaplains Memorial Foundation (FCMF) is to tell the story of the Immortal Chaplains to promote interfaith cooperation and selfless service among individuals and organizations. Each year, donations collected by American Legion departments and posts through Four Chaplains ceremonies and other events support FCMF programs, including the Legion of Honor awards, youth scholarships and veterans outreach. The foundation also sponsors Emergency Chaplain & First Responder Chaplain programs, which assist American Legion chaplains nationwide in responding to natural disasters and emergencies, as well as training for first responder chaplains and mental health professionals.

THE CHAPEL

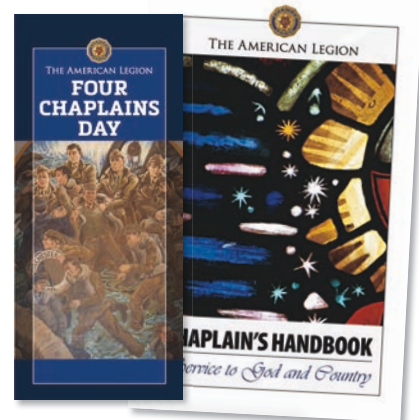
The Chapel of the Four Chaplains opened on the campus of Temple University in Philadelphia on Feb. 3, 1951. President Harry Truman dedicated the interfaith chapel and unveiled a large, 20-foot mural depicting the Four Chaplains during their final moments aboard *Dorchester*. The chapel remained on campus for three decades before renovations forced it to relocate. In 2000, it moved to a decommissioned World War II Navy chapel in Philadelphia, where visitors can view the historic mural, five bronze plaques bearing the names of those who died in *Dorchester's* sinking, and four large portraits of the Four Chaplains.



Photo by Bryen Woolston

Learn more about the Four Chaplains and how to conduct a Four Chaplains Day program by downloading *The American Legion Chaplain's Handbook* and Four Chaplains Day brochure.

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— Tierian "Randy" Cash, American Legion Department of North Carolina adjutant and past national chaplain



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HONOR & REMEMBRANCE

Special Forces captain envisions memorial to French Resistance

Retiring U.S. Special Forces Cpt. Joseph Ivanov spent part of the COVID-19 pandemic last spring indulging his passion for history by exploring elite, secret operations of World War II. What he found was something he believes has been missing from the historical Normandy landscape: a memorial to the French Resistance.

After watching a documentary on the 2012-dedicated Navy Monument on the Normandy coastline, Ivanov made some calls. "It's like 67 years later, and they put a monument at Utah Beach to commemorate Operation Neptune, what the Navy did," Ivanov says. "How did we go so long without paying a tribute to these men and women?"

The story of the French Resistance is one he does not want to see slip away, in part because Ivanov traces his own military lineage to that movement, which gave rise to the Special Operations Executive of Great Britain (SOE) and the U.S. Office of Strategic Services (OSS), which was forged and led by one of The American Legion's founders, William Donovan, considered the father of modern U.S. military intelligence.

One of the calls Ivanov made after studying the French Forces of the Interior (FFI) was to Steven Spears, who designed the Navy Monument at Utah Beach. He was immediately excited about the project.

"I envisioned this three-tiered monument of a guerrilla, auxiliary and the underground," Ivanov explained. "The guerrilla is the middle-aged man. The auxiliary is the young boy on the bicycle. The underground is the female pressing out a comms message, which was very authentic to what I read and the roles being played."

Spears carved a scale-model maquette that portrays the three levels of the resistance, and Ivanov contacted Operation Democracy of Locust Valley, N.Y., which has worked with The American Legion on the Flags for Freedom program and annual commemorations of the Allied landings in Normandy. Operation Democracy found the French Resistance memorial to be a perfect fit for its mission and gave the project a nonprofit parent organization for tax-deductible contributions.

Even today, many French families whose ancestors were in the resistance don't talk much about it. Memorials to their contribution in World War II are scattered and relatively small. "Families are still very quiet about it. But if we don't capture these stories, they're gone forever."

As he has worked on the concept, some former French Resistance participants and families "are coming forward," he says. "There's going to be plenty of people at this (dedication)." He hopes to have the memorial finished and shipped to Normandy by June, having personally funded the initial work. Learn more about the project at operationdemocracy.com/normandy-french-resistance-monument-project.

— Jeff Stoffer

MEMBERSHIP

NEW POSTS

Staff Sgt. Jason Vasquez Post 939, Chicago Chartered Oct. 15
(16 members)

Expeditionary Post 1, Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic Chartered Oct. 14 (15 members)

Returning Warriors Post 22, Majuro, Republic of the Marshall Islands Chartered Oct. 14 (15 members)

Sgt. Thomas Oliver Ahlberg Memorial Post 2, Pattaya, Thailand Chartered Oct. 14 (43 members)

Prince George Post 1703, North Prince George, Va. Chartered Sept. 10
(23 members)

Gabriel A. Rodriguez Post 1928, Buffalo, N.Y. Chartered July 16
(15 members)

Lt. Col. Meech Tahsequah Post 6, Lawton, Okla. Chartered May 4
(15 members)

VERBATIM

I just felt so proud to have been part of that little seed money that will hopefully grow into something great and help to heal this world.

Dolly Parton, legendary songwriter and entertainer, on learning that her \$1 million donation to COVID-19 research partly funded Moderna's vaccine

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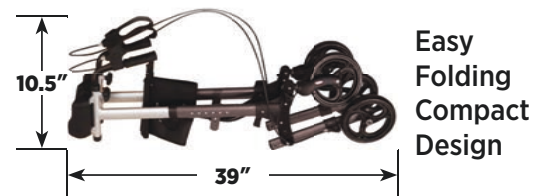
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It's a cruel fact of life, as we age, gravity takes over. Our muscles droop, our bodies sag and the weight of the world seems to be planted squarely on our shoulders. We dread taking a fall, so we find ourselves walking less and less- and that only makes matters worse.

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MEMORIAM

Champion of the blue-cap Legionnaire

Friends, colleagues remember Past National Commander Clarence Bacon.

In 1979, Richard J. Santos was sworn in as commander of American Legion Post 136 in Greenbelt, Md. Twenty-two years later, in San Antonio, Santos was sworn in as American Legion national commander.

Both times, Past National Commander Clarence M. Bacon was there to administer the oath of office. The two men shared a 44-year friendship in which Santos regarded Bacon – who died Nov. 10 at 95 – as a trusted mentor. “It would behoove anyone to have a Clarence Bacon behind them, (and) to always talk to him,” Santos said. “It would be a mistake to not take advantage of the knowledge and the perspective he had of The American Legion, and of life too.”

A 68-year Legionnaire and the last living American Legion national commander to serve in World War II, Bacon was elected to the position in 1984. He served in dozens of other roles within the organization, from the post level to national. Along the way he built friendships across the country.

“He was a gentleman personified,” Past National Commander John “Jake” Comer said. “He was a blue-cap Legionnaire personified. They loved him wherever he went.”

In an October 1984 interview with *The American Legion Magazine*, Bacon said, “The blue-capper represents the Legion in the community, and it’s there – in them and in what they do – that the Legion either lives or dies.”

Concluding his tenure as national commander at the 1985 national convention in New Orleans, Bacon again praised Legionnaires working hard at the post level. “It is the grassroots volunteers who make this organization go,” he told delegates. “We all owe them every ounce of support we can muster.”



Photo by Lucas Carter

As national commander, Bacon rallied Legionnaires against proposed cuts to VA, urging them to contact their elected officials in Washington to “make sure they understand where you, as an American veteran and citizen, stand on these issues. ... Sacrificing the nation’s 28 million veterans is not the way to balance the budget!”

Bacon also called for VA benefits for veterans exposed to Agent Orange, and announced the first findings from an American Legion-sponsored independent study by Columbia University of Vietnam veterans who came into contact with the defoliant.

After retiring from the Department of the Navy in 1980, he founded C.M. Bacon Associates, a

firm specializing in computer logistical planning and management consulting. Using the GI Bill, Bacon earned degrees in accounting and business management, and did graduate work at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces and the University of Maryland.

Past National Commander Daniel Ludwig met Bacon while serving as a Minnesota district commander during Bacon’s visit to the state as national commander. “He was an unbelievably brilliant man,” Ludwig said. “He had a passion for this country, for The American Legion and for veterans.”

Past National Commander Ronald Conley also saw in Bacon a trusted leader and adviser. “I appreciated his advice,” he said. “I appreciated his support. He’s truly going to be missed. He knew his Legion, that’s for sure.”

– Steven B. Brooks

Watch Clarence Bacon’s “PNC Perspectives” video:

legion.org/legiontv



Photo courtesy Enrique Romero Nieves American Legion Post 102

VERBATIM

We want to protect our members and also join in protecting the public, because we’re all in this together.

Annie Day Henry, vice commander of Enrique Romero Nieves American Legion Post 102 in St. Croix, Virgin Islands, which donated more than 1,300 protective face masks to the Herbert Grigg Home for the Aged on Nov. 4

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SUICIDE PREVENTION

Florida post marches to fight veteran suicide

In late August 2016, newly elected Winter Garden, Fla., American Legion Post 63 Chaplain Kurt Gies received an email that would both challenge him and change his life.

"I got an email saying, 'September is Suicide Awareness Month. We've got 22 vets a day committing suicide. Get a group of people together and go out for a walk to raise some awareness.' My first reaction was, as a retired naval officer after 25 years, we have how many people committing suicide? ... I thought it was some kind of misprint."

The following year, he landed on Challenge 22, an awareness-building concept earlier executed by American Legion Post 69 in Avon Park, Fla., that could be tailored to engage the whole community. The Post 63 version would be a series of annual 2.2-mile marches, beginning and ending with ceremonies involving veterans, Sea Cadets, area Legionnaires, families and organizations that help veterans dealing with PTSD. The event raised over \$150,000 for groups that help veterans at risk for suicide in the first three years. In 2019, participation soared to more than 1,000, and the event raised \$85,000. Live music, food and presentations on treatment programs converted the suicide-prevention walk into a celebration of patriotic responsibility. No fewer than five Florida posts are now doing Challenge 22 events.

In January, Post 63 was planning its biggest Challenge 22 ever, hoping to raise \$100,000 for groups like 22 Zero, which uses successful peer-to-peer RTM (Reconsolidation of Traumatic Memories) protocol to help veterans with PTSD.

The COVID-19 pandemic, however, led the city to ask that the 2020 event be canceled. "We worked through it," Gies told the crowd at Winter Garden's Veterans Memorial Park on Nov. 14 during opening ceremonies, before nearly 300 marchers began their trek, following strict safety conditions and substantial support from the city.

"People want to be part of something," said Gies, now commander of the post. "The number of younger members we are generating because we show we care is huge."

Read the full story about Challenge 22 at legion.org.



Winter Garden, Fla., American Legion Post 63 Commander Kurt Gies leads more than 275 marchers in the fourth annual Challenge 22 on Nov. 14. Photo by Jeff Stoffer



USNS Hershel "Woody" Williams (ESB 4) U.S. Navy photo

ACTIVE DUTY

Navy sends signal in Med

The Navy has announced it will homeport USS *Hershel "Woody" Williams* at Souda Bay in Greece – the first time in 40 years Greece will host a major U.S. warship.

As *Stars and Stripes* reports, porting *Williams* – an "expeditionary seabase" capable of deploying Marines, special operations personnel and other assets – is likely a response to Russia's military buildup in the Mediterranean.

"Moscow has a base in Syria and an expanding influence in Libya, where Russia has deployed hundreds of state-backed mercenaries, fighter planes and other weaponry." Basing *Williams* in Greece "provides a new capability in the theater," Vice Adm. Gene Black, U.S. 6th Fleet commander, said.

The Souda Bay complex, which has been a Navy logistics hub since 1969, includes an airfield, a port and a new pier capable of supporting an aircraft carrier.

EDUCATION

How to switch to Chapter 31 benefits



Q: I'm attending community college using my Post-9/11 GI Bill Chapter 33 education benefits. My VA disability compensation rating was approved for 50 percent due to injuries sustained while serving in the Army. I've heard about Chapter 31, Veteran Readiness and Employment. Is it possible to switch from Chapter 33 to Chapter 31? If so, what are the steps to receive those education benefits?

A: Yes, you may switch while attending school using Chapter 33. To receive Chapter 31, you must apply at ebenefits.va.gov. Select "Veteran Readiness and Employment" in the Apply column. After you apply, a vocational rehabilitation counselor will schedule a meeting to determine your eligibility for Chapter 31 benefits. When a decision is made, you and your counselor will work together to develop a rehabilitation plan. The counselor will consider your disability, ensuring your program of choice will not limit your ability to prepare for, obtain and maintain suitable employment (i.e., a job that does not worsen your disability, is stable, and matches your abilities, aptitudes and interests).

Valerie Heffner is a Marine Corps veteran and member of American Legion Post 27 in Apache Junction, Ariz. askvalerie@legion.org

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PERSONAL FINANCE



Back to financial basics in the new year

FOCUS ON FINANCES



J.J. MONTANARO

We're all rolling into the new year with high hopes that 2021 will look a lot different than 2020. To help get things on track, I've made a short list of resolutions. While making a list is a far cry from seeing it through, these resolutions inspire me because they feel attainable. Join me in my quest to change the narrative next year

with five actions for sustainable change:

- **Have a plan with a vision.** Whether you are intent on spending less, paying down debt or saving for another goal, create a simple written plan. Display it front and center, whether that means taping it to the refrigerator, your closet door or computer screen. To increase your success factor, make it visual. Maybe it's a picture of your dream home, or you standing on the putting green, or maybe just an image of your mailbox with certainty that nothing scary awaits.
- **Get laser focused.** Pick one or two important goals and follow through with a plan to achieve them. After 2020, you can probably identify a dozen areas that could benefit from your attention. Remember that 2021 is about lasting change, and narrowing your focus can make that a reality.

▪ **Reward yourself along the way.** All work and no breaks usually leads to disaster. You've probably been there – a binge of sweets after weeks of dieting or a shopping spree that sinks months of frugality. Plan some modest “atta boys” along the way. Got that first credit card paid off? Enjoy a night out with your spouse or friend. (But pay with cash!)

▪ **Enlist some help.** Whether you're watching what you eat or trying to exercise more, knowing someone will be there to give you a well-earned pat on the back or a much-needed kick in the backside is helpful. The same is true with financial goals. Accountability partners can also be more formal, such as a financial planner or counselor.

▪ **Be realistic.** Set achievable goals. In many cases, your plan may be a multiyear endeavor with small, realistic steps along the way. We know one of the quickest ways to failure is through goals disguised as dreams. Instead, mastering easy wins through small steps gives you the encouragement you need to make big changes.

J.J. Montanaro is a certified financial planner with USAA, The American Legion's preferred provider of financial services. Submit questions for him online.

 legion.org/usaa/focusonfinances

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DEFENSE

A supersonic Air Force One

The Air Force is eyeing a supersonic version of Air Force One.

As Military.com reports, “the service’s Presidential and Executive Airlift Directorate awarded a \$1 million small business innovation research (SBIR) phase II contract to Exosonic, a start-up aerospace company, to begin the design and development of a low-boom executive airlift concept.”

The contract “will support Exosonic’s efforts to develop and modify the company’s commercial supersonic airliner to serve as an executive transport vehicle,” according to the company. Among the design modifications Exosonic will make to its existing airframe to accommodate presidential specs are “reconfiguring the aircraft cabin to include ... required accommodations, communications equipment and security measures.”

Even if the Air Force gives the go-ahead for a supersonic Air Force One, it will be many years away, as two Boeing 747-8 aircraft have already been selected as the next iteration of the famous aircraft.



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A re-discovery from the 1600s is causing a frenzy within the medical system. A weird herb has been shown in six clinical studies (and by thousands of users) to be very effective for leg and feet pain, burning and numbness – with no side effects – at low cost – and with no doctor visit or prescription needed.

This weird herb comes from a 12-foot tall tree that grows in Greece and other countries in Europe. In the old days, people noticed that when their horses who had leg and feet problems ate this herb – it was almost like magic how quickly their problems got much better. They called it the “horse herb”. Then somehow with Europe’s ongoing wars, this herbal secret got lost in time.

“It works for people who’ve tried many other treatments before with little or no success. Other doctors and I are shocked at how effective it is. It has created a lot of excitement” says Dr. Ryan Shelton, M.D.

Its active ingredient has been put into pill form and improved. It is being offered in the United States under the brand name Neuroflo.

WHY ALL THIS EXCITEMENT?

Researchers have found an herb originally from Greece that has been shown in six placebo-controlled medical studies (543 participants) to be effective and safe. This natural compound strengthens blood vessel walls and reduces swelling to stop the pain and suffering.

Poor blood flow in the legs and feet is one of the common problems that develop as we age. Millions of Americans suffer from neuropathy and chronic venous insufficiency (CVI), edema, and other leg/feet problems – millions have these but are undiagnosed.

Today’s treatments don’t work for a high percentage of people – and they have side effects that make them hard to tolerate or that people do not want to risk. This includes prescription drugs, over the counter pain pills, surgery and compression.

Already popular in Europe, this natural herb (*horse chestnut seed extract*) is taking America by storm since it was announced last week.

HOW IT WORKS

Here’s why you have pain now: Your arteries have weakened. Your arteries can’t carry enough blood, nutrients and oxygen down to your legs and feet. This damages your nerves and causes your burning, tingling and numbness.

The herbs in the pill Neuroflo strengthen your arteries that carry blood, nutrients and oxygen to your feet and legs. It improves your circulation so oxygenated blood goes to the nerves and repairs them. This makes your nerves grow stronger so your pain fades away and your legs and feet feel much younger again.

Until now, scientists could not combine these herbs into one pill without losing their full potency, but finally, they have succeeded.

Katerina King from Murrieta, California says, “I had hands and feet tingling and snapping and burning feeling. It made my life very uncomfortable. I had a hard time walking, my legs felt like they each weighed 50 pounds. Once I got in my car and my feet felt so heavy I couldn’t even drive the car. With Neuroflo I have no more tingling, cold or burning painful legs and feet. It went away.”

WHAT DOCTORS ARE SAYING

“Now I finally have a natural solution I can recommend to my patients who suffer from leg and feet problems and pain. I’m delighted because previous treatments were not effective, but Neuroflo has worked for every one of my patients with no side effects” says Dr. Eric Wood, N.D.

Dr. Ryan Shelton, M.D. says “This is new and different. It works for people who’ve tried many other things before. It is natural with no side effects. Don’t give



up hope for your leg and feet pain, burning, tingling and numbing. This pill is working for countless people after other treatments have failed them. I highly recommend it.”



RE-DISCOVERED LEG AND FEET PROBLEM

SOLUTION: In Greece in the 1600s, this herb was originally called “horse herb” because it was fed to horses with ailing legs. It has now been re-discovered and is giving soothing comfort to Americans who have leg and feet pain, burning, tingling and numbness.

“Neuroflo is a terrific choice for people with leg and feet issues. The clinical trials in support of this herb show it is very effective for safe and fast relief,” said Dr. Wood, a Harvard trained doctor who has appeared on award winning TV shows.

Now you can get a good night’s sleep – peaceful, restful sleep – with no pain, tingling, zinging, itching or zapping. Improve your balance and coordination. No side effects – safe to take with other medications. Enjoy your favorite activities and hobbies again. Be more active, have more fun, enjoy life more. Don’t risk damage to your feet and hands. Don’t let it get dangerously worse.

Neuroflo is GUARANTEED to work for you – or you will get full refund with a 90-day unconditional money-back guarantee. It is NOT sold in stores. No prescription or doctor visit is required.

UP TO 50% OFF FOR THE NEXT 10 DAYS

This is the official release of Neuroflo in the state. Therefore, everyone who calls within the next 10 days will receive up to 50% OFF their first order. A toll-free hotline number has been set up for local readers to call for up to 50% OFF savings. The number will be open starting at 7:00 am today and only for the next 10 days.

All you have to do is CALL TOLL-FREE **1-800-515-9986** and provide the operator with the special discount approval code: **NEF158**.

Important: Due to Neuroflo’s popularity and recent media exposure on ABC, CBS and FOX NEWS, phone lines are often busy. If you call and do not get through immediately, please be patient and call back. Those who miss the 10 day deadline for up to 50% OFF will have to pay more for Neuroflo.

How to submit a reunion

The American Legion Magazine publishes reunion notices for veterans. Send notices to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Reunions, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**, fax (317) 630-1280, e-mail reunions@legion.org or submit information via our website, www.legion.org/reunions.

Include the branch of service and complete name of the group, no abbreviations, with your request. The listing also should include the reunion dates and city, along with a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Listings are publicized free of charge.

Your notice will appear on our Web site within a week and will remain available online until the final day of your reunion. Upon submission, please allow three months for your reunion to be published in print. **Due to the large number of reunions, The American Legion Magazine will publish a group's listing only once a year.**

Notices should be sent at least six months prior to the reunion to ensure timely publication.

Other notices

"In Search Of" is a means of getting in touch with people from your unit to plan a reunion. **We do not publish listings that seek people for interviews, research purposes, military photos or help in filing a VA claim.** Listings must include the name of the unit from which you seek people, the time period and the location, as well as a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Send notices to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: "In Search Of," P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**, fax (317) 630-1280 or e-mail reunions@legion.org.

The magazine will not publish names of individuals, only the name of the unit. Listings are published free of charge.

Life Membership notices are published for Legionnaires who have been awarded life

memberships by their posts. **This does not include a member's own Paid-Up-For-Life membership.** Notices must be submitted on official forms, which may be obtained by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Life Memberships, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.**

"Comrades in Distress" listings must be approved by the Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation division. If you are seeking to verify an injury received during service, contact your Legion department service officer for information on how to publish a notice.

To respond to a "Comrades in Distress" listing, send a letter to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Comrades in Distress, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.** Include the listing's CID number in your response.

"Taps" notices are published only for Legionnaires who served as department commanders or national officers.

AIR FORCE / ARMY AIR FORCES

502nd Tact Cntl Grp & HQ, 605th, 606th, 607th and 608th AC&W Sqdns (Korean War), Branson, MO, 5/15-18, Bill Aylward, (703) 715-0880, waylward1@verizon.net

ARMY

3rd Plt 501st MP (Bamberg, Germany) – 30-Year Gulf War Reunion, San Diego, 6/21, Robert Howard, (407) 412-1443, rehoward305@yahoo.com

NAVY

Andrew Jackson SSBN 619, Orlando, FL, 8/30-9/4, Alonzo "Doc" McAllister Jr., (941) 493-7488, patiopapa37@yahoo.com; **Bausell DD 845**, St. George, UT, 9/26-30, Eugene D'Arezzo, (928) 854-2205, genied@frontiernet.net; **Leary DD 879**, Harrisburg, PA, 9/21-26, Al Redden, (308) 530-1284, alshr@allophone.com; **Perry DD 844**, Jacksonville, FL, 3/18-22, Joan Guariniello, (727) 868-9368, jandlassoc@aol.com; **Robert E. Lee Assn SSBN/SSN 601**, Kings Bay, GA, 11/3-7, (405) 410-9206, joewhite727@gmail.com; **VAW-12**, Pensacola, FL, 4/19-22, Dick Bray, (585) 576-0595, leighbray@hotmail.com

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Post 222, FL: Joseph C. Ciechalski, James L. Hein, Charles J. Peterson, Albert M. Souck

Post 260, IN: Michael Brown, Jessie Duron, Paul McCormack

Post 41, WV: Donald Sanders

IN SEARCH OF

2nd Inf Div (Korea DMZ, 1965-1991), Mike Davino, (919) 498-1910, 2ida.pao@charter.net
5th Cbt Eng Bn (Binh Thuy, Vietnam, 1970), Rick Benting, (605) 460-1720, rbenting@midco.net

494th Armd Field Arty (WWII), Bill Vosseler, (610) 558-2163, hellcatnews@yahoo.com

1607th Comm & Electronics Sqdn (All Shops, Dover AFB, 1961-1964), Joel Gray, 1607thcomm.elect@gmail.com

D Co 2nd ABG 187th Inf (Fort Campbell, KY, 1960-1963), Don Nabozney, (810) 364-4265, dgnabozney@comcast.net

PBR Mobile Base II, Tan An (NSA Saigon, Nha Be, June 1970-June 1971), Roy Basilio Rios, (281) 217-6979, roybrios@yahoo.com

TAPS

Clarence Bacon, Dept. of Maryland. Nat'l Cmdr.

1984-1985, Dept. Cmdr. 1974-1975, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Alt. Memb. 1976-1978, Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1972-1974, Nat'l Advisory Cmte. to the Nat'l Cmdr. Chmn. 1985-1986 and 2012-2016, Nat'l Advisory Cmte. to the Nat'l Cmdr. Vice Chmn. 1986-1987, Nat'l Advisory Cmte. to the Nat'l Cmdr. Memb. 2001-2002 and 2008-2012, Nat'l Citizens Flag Alliance Cmte. Dept. Chmn. 1994-1996 and 2001-2014, Nat'l Conv. Cmsn Ex-Officio Memb. 1989-1990 and 2015-2016, Nat'l Endowment Fund Corp. Memb. 2006-2007, Nat'l Endowment Fund Corp. Director 2007-2016, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Memb. 1978-1980, Nat'l Ad Hoc Cmte. to Study Departments and Posts Located Outside of the Continental United States Memb. 2014-2017, Nat'l Overseas Graves Decoration Trust Chmn. 1984-1985, Nat'l Overseas Graves Decoration Trust Memb 1985-1987, Nat'l Internal Affairs Cmsn. Consultant 1983-1984, Nat'l Legis. Cmsn. Chmn. 1981-1982, Nat'l Legis. Cmsn. Consultant 1982-1983, Nat'l Legis. Cncl. Chmn. 1976-1978, Nat'l Legis. Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 1978-1980, Nat'l Sec. Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1975-1976, Nat'l Sec. Cncl. Chmn. 1980-1981, Nat'l Veterans Planning & Coordinating Cmte. Chmn. 1984-1985, Nat'l World War II 75th Anniv. Commemorative Cmte. Memb. 2016-2016 and Nat'l Select Cmte. on Special Problems of the

Veterans Affairs & Rehab. Program Vice Chmn. 1981-1982.

Bobby J. Longenbaugh, Dept. of Oklahoma.

Dept. Cmdr. 2006-2007, Nat'l Americanism Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 2008-2009, Nat'l Constitution & By-Laws Cmte. Memb. 2005-2007, Nat'l Children & Youth Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 2007-2008, Nat'l Veterans Employment & Education Cmsn. Memb. 2009-2011 and Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Memb. 2007-2009.

Neil J. Neary, Dept. of Montana. Dept. Cmdr. 2005-2006.

Harold E. Plants, Dept. of West Virginia. Dept. Cmdr. 2006-2007, Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 2002-2003, Nat'l Veterans Affairs & Rehab. Cmsn. Memb. 2005-2010 and Nat'l Veterans Affairs & Rehab. Cmsn. Region 2 Memb. 2003-2005.

CANCELED REUNIONS

If your military reunion has been canceled, let us know by sending an email to reunions@legion.org. For a list of canceled reunions, go to legion.org/reunions/canceled. If your military reunion is going virtual, post a listing at legion.org/reunions or send an email to reunions@legion.org.

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A man showed up for a duel armed only with a pencil and paper. He proceeded to draw his weapon.

YESTERDAY I saw a guy spill a bunch of Scrabble letters on the road. I asked him, “What’s the word on the street?”

WHEN MY CO-WORKER answered his phone, a woman on the other end asked, “Who is this?”

“This is Steve. With whom do you wish to speak?”

After a pause, the woman replied. “Did you just say ‘whom?’”

“Yes, I did.”

“I must have the wrong number.”

I’M NOT CLUMSY. It’s just that the floor hates me, the tables and chairs are bullies, and the wall gets in the way.

REMEMBER that you can reset your resolutions on Jan. 14 (Orthodox New Year) and Feb. 12 (Chinese New Year). After that, you’re really on your own.

MONEY doesn’t buy you happiness, but it can buy you a jet ski. It is impossible to be sad when you’re riding on a jet ski.

WHERE ARE average things manufactured? The satisfactory.

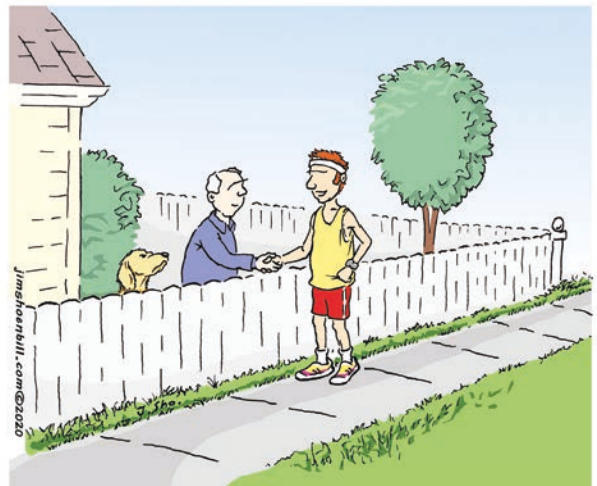
WHEN SOMEONE says, “Expect the unexpected,” slap him and say, “Didn’t expect that, did you?”



“From the looks of this report card, you’ve been social-studies distancing.”



“I gotta tell ya, I am loving the new bunk bed.”



“It’s so nice to finally meet you!
Your dog and I have despised each other for years.”

WHAT DID the Tin Man say when he was run over by a steamroller? “Curses! Foil again!”

THERE’S A NEW TREND in our office: everyone is putting names on their food. I realized it today while I was eating a sandwich named Kevin.

A DRIVER visiting the big city for the first time stopped at a red light. But when the light turned green, he stayed where he was. After it changed several more times and he still didn’t move, a traffic cop ran over and inquired politely, “What’s wrong? Don’t we have any colors you like?”

“PEOPLE never really mention that Willy Wonka just handed Charlie the deed to a factory that’s about to get hit with a handful of wrongful-death lawsuits.” – Tim Ross

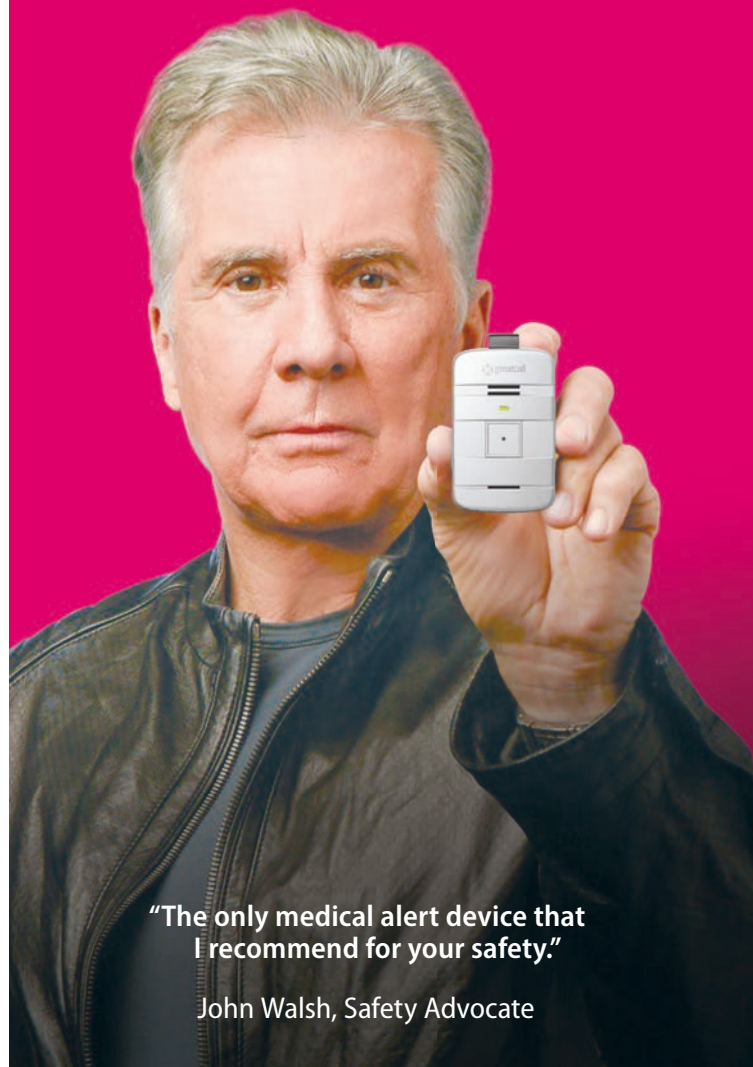


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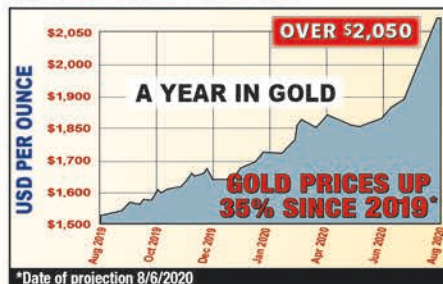
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